1: DeLand O-4 (No date)1908 NQ17 Mandan NQ17



and it is protected by a narrow shed or entry from six to ten feet long. Over the smoke-holes of many of the lodges are placed frames of wicker-work, on which skins are spread to the windward in stormy weather to keep the lodges from getting smoky. Sometimes bull-boats are used for this purpose. On the site of a proposed lodge, they often dig down a foot or more, in order to find earth compact enough to form a good floor; so, in some lodges, the floors are lower than the general surfaces of the ground on which the village stands. The floor is of earth, and has in its center a circular depression, for a fire-place, about a foot deep, and three or four feet wide, with a edging of flat rocks. These dwellings, being from thirty to forty feet in diameter, from ten to fifteen feet high in the center, and from five to seven feet high at the eaves, are quite commodious."

**Women Construct Them.** "The labor of constructing them is performed mostly by the women; but in lifting and setting the heavier beams, the men assist. If, with the aid of steel axes obtained from the whites, the task of building such a house is no easy one at this day, how difficult it must have been a century ago, when the stone axe was their best implement, and when the larger logs had to be burned through in order that pieces of suitable length might be obtained."

**Frame of Lodge.** "The frame of the lodge is thus made: A number of stout posts, from ten to fifteen, according to the size of the lodge, and raising to the height of about five feet above the surface of the earth, are set about ten feet apart in a circle. On the tops of these posts, solid beams are laid, extending from one to another. Then, towards the center of the lodge, four posts are erected, of much greater diameter than the outer posts, and rising to the height of ten or more feet about the ground. These four posts stand in the corners of a square about fifteen feet, and their tops are connected with four heavy logs or beams laid horizontally. From the four center beams to the smaller external beams, long poles, or rafters, are stretched at an angle of about 30 degrees with the horizon; and from the outer beams to the earth a number of shorter poles are laid at an angle of about 45 degrees. Finally, a number of saplings or rails are laid horizontally to cover the space between the four central beams, leaving only a hole for the combined skylight and chimney. This frame

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17



either of the nearest relatives or of the clan to which the lodge belonged. They believed that the lodge had a spirit which would have sent bad luck to one taking possession illegally.

The females of the lodge owned in common the domestic goods consisting of bedding, pots, household and gardening tools, the dogs, gardens, the wooden mortar and pestle, and the mares and colts. Clothing and personal effects were held individually. The men owned their weapons used in warfare and hunting as well as their own clothing and pipes. Men also owned the stallions and geldings. Sacred tribal bundles were held collectively by the man and his wives.

Lodges were built with little ceremony; the only rites were performed at the cutting of the notches for the four center posts when an old woman having the right to cut the posts was called in to sing one song and pray for the family's success. She received one robe for her services. It was the duty of the clan to assist in the erection of a member's lodge. Since these lodges were large, a considerable amount of work was entailed in erecting one and covering it with poles, willows, grass, and earth.[3] As a rule, the clan prepared a feast and invited the opposite moiety to assist, in which case the clans assisted according to the seating arrangement of the men in the Okipa or in council.

Mandan informants state that in earlier times each household had one or more game pits. These pits were dug by all the members of the household and were owned collectively. While the men would bring the poles for the cover and kill the game caught in them, the women frequently did most of the work of excavating and removing earth from the area of the pit. In recent times many households had fishtraps which are believed to have been used since introduced by Black Wolf. Fish bones, particularly catfish bones, are very abundant in the Heart River villages. The ceremonies associated with the trapping of fish, particularly the catfish, were performed by the older men, but the women assisted in weaving the walls for the trap and in sorting and cleaning the fish.

There was considerable variability in the status of household

3. For a report of the amount of materials used in the completion of an earth lodge see George F. Will, "The Mandan Lodge at Bismarck," *North Dakota Historical Quarterly*, Vol. V, No. 1 (October, 1930).

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17



593 [601] *mų'he* and others speak of her as *kų̊'hE*. An old man addresses an old wife as *mo'kaka*, meaning "old woman," and she addresses him as "old man." The husband usually lived with his wife's people, and the strength of bond between husband and wife was in a large measure determined by the circumstances of marriage. If parents of a lineage possessing an important tribal bundle secured a white buffalo robe and had a daughter or daughters of marriageable age, they would invite in a young man of another family distinguished for its important tribal bundle and complete a marriage. Such marriages were likely to be permanent, since both the husband and the wife were partners in an important ceremony. When children were born, the bond between husband and wife was further strengthened.

593 162 There was a marked sex dichotomy between husband and wife. The woman did the housework, cared for the gardens, repaired the lodge, and, when on tribal hunts, did much of the butchering, while the man did the hunting, cared for the horses, and protected the village in case of attack. The woman was expected to prepare food for ceremonies in which the husband was participating, and, in the buffalo-calling ceremonies, she was expected to "walk with the buffaloes." She was also expected to "walk" with her husband's "fathers" in ceremonial transfers of age-grade societies.

586 A woman could divorce her husband by the simple expediency of telling him to leave if they were living in the wife's parents' lodge; if living in her husband's parents' lodge, she collected her personal belongings and the children and returned to her parents' lodge. A woman divorced because of cruelty or adultery on the part of her husband, while a man would leave his wife because of trouble with her family or infatuation for another woman.

581 584 596 Few marriages were consummated by mutual selection of the prospective mates; rather the two households made the selection, and children were expected to obey their parents even to the extent of approving mates selected for them. The ties which held husband and wife together were first the respect for their parents, but, when children were born, this parental respect was replaced by mutual affection for the children. Since divorce was easy and common, the household organization was strong,

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17



736 In the event of separation or death the children were provided for by the mother's household, with the father's household generally disregarding them.

581 556 These various accounts of types of marriage might be analyzed at length; it is sufficient here to note some significant situations which can be explained as accounting for the variations that occur as well as the number of different relatives participating in one way or another. We have noted the great emphasis placed on wealth and the part it played at the naming of a child. There was a comparable display of wealth when a young man returned from his first successful war expedition. Mandan informants speak of advancement in the tribe as steps in a ladder. As one took a new step, he made certain payments. For those of eminence, marriage was treated in the same way. Except for those marriages which involved bundle purchase, marriage was secular in character and involved only a few people.

162 Plains warfare greatly unbalanced the proportion of women to men. My census of the Mandan as of 1870–72 showed that males constituted only 38 per cent of the total population. A similar proportion was found for Hidatsa men. If we disregard all children under fifteen years of age, the proportion of men would be even smaller. The women of the household played an exclusive role in gardening unless one considers the use of young men as watchmen during the day to prevent a surprise attack by their enemies. The women built the earth lodges except for the raising of the heavier rafters and repaired them from time to time. They dressed the hides and made all the household goods. They did most of the butchering, except when animals were killed at a distance from the village. And they found time to participate in many of the men's ceremonies besides having ceremonies of their own. They were acquainted with ceremonies in which tribal custom did not permit their participation and on some occasions were intrusted with important ritualism ultimately to be transferred to their children. They reared their families and trained them without a great deal of help from their husbands. Some lodge groups in 1870–72 had had no male old enough to hunt for ten years or more. Informants thought that the physical needs of such households were pretty well taken care of by the tribal system of mutual

562 462

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17



assistance and the fact that the game run into yards was divided on a moiety basis.

Households having no males suffered most in their ceremonial life. When an important tribal bundle got out of the lodge, it was usually difficult to get it back.

Marriage within the clan was not permitted. There was no punishment other than tribal criticism, and in the census taken as of 1870–72 only one instance was reported by informants, and all the informants questioned on this point mentioned the case. The one instance of marriage within the clan was between Standing Bear and Beaver Woman; though the tribe did not approve of the marriage, they thought that in a way it was justified, since Beaver Woman's mother suggested the marriage after both parties were over fifty-five years of age. The women were brought to Standing Bear's lodge, and the marriage was entered into after the women lost their lodge.

Certain Mandan clans had Hidatsa equivalents. Both had a Prairie Chicken clan; the Mandan WaxikEna clan was considered equivalent to the Hidatsa Maxoxati; the Tamisik clan was equivalent to the Hidatsa Knife clan. The Mandan were not in agreement as to the wisdom of marriage between Mandan-Hidatsa equated clans. Some treated them as separate lineages and considered marriage permissible. Bad Gun's wife's younger sister, however, refused to marry him, believing that the Tamisik and Knife were divisions of a single clan.

The Mandan claim that moieties were exogamous until after 1837 and that it was more convenient to go through the ceremonies with the wives when they were of opposite moieties, giving as the basis for the breakdown of the moieties the shortage of men. People preferred to marry into the moiety to marrying outside the tribe.

Both the levirate and the sororate were permissible. When a man married to the older sister died, a younger brother had first chance to marry the widow, which he could do with only a token payment. Such marriages were highly regarded. This was rarely done, since, with a shortage of men, the younger brother was usually already married to several women. When a wife died, the husband could claim one of her younger sisters as wife, and she seldom refused, especially if her sister had small children.

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17



the offerings to the horns of some weathered buffalo skull found conveniently near by. If a horse fell into a washout, stepped into a badger hole and injured its rider, or was gored by a buffalo, the leader was said to have "kicked the stone" and was usually never selected again unless he fasted sufficiently to receive the forgiveness of the aggrieved parties.

As leader of the hunters, he was expected to make successful surrounds without losing his men from accident. Having been successful on many surrounds, it was believed that he was lucky and had sacred objects that were protecting him and his party. He was then eligible to become the leader of a future summer buffalo-hunting party.

A man's responsibilities increased greatly as the leader of the summer buffalo-hunting party. His selection was made in council held a month before the village was to leave for the summer hunt. The principal men of the village met to consider the matter of a leader. Crows Heart claimed that all who had been lucky in warfare or in leading the hunters aspired to be the summer buffalo-hunt leader at least once in their lifetime. The leader was selected from those who had buffalo skulls as a part of their sacred bundles. These skulls became a part of bundles either through purchase of a hereditary bundle or, more rarely, were introduced into a bundle when vision instructed. It was necessary to have unanimous consent of the head men to become leader, and the appointment was for only one expedition away from the village. A change was usually made for subsequent hunts on the former leader's recommendation, as it was believed that one would have bad luck if he led too many hunts. When a selection had been made, the crier for the Black Mouth Society[1] went through the village announcing the decision.

The leader consulted the village chief in matters relative to preparation of the equipment and the leaders of war parties relative to the protection of the party which would comprise the entire population except a few feeble people who preferred to visit in a neighboring village while the party was away. The women first weeded and hilled their garden crops while the men prepared the dog and horse equipment. While preparations for the summer hunt were being completed, scouts were sent

[1] [The men's society intrusted with the organization and protection of the village. See pp. 94-95, Cat. 116.—Analyst]

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17



in a line. Household groups kept together, since they would stop from time to time to dig wild turnips. Whenever the leader saw these plants in great numbers, he would ask his assistant, the announcer of the Black Mouths, to stop the party. All would dig except the scouts, who were ahead guarding the party against surprise by the enemy or hunting for fresh meat, and the Black Mouths, who were mounted and armed to protect the party against attack. The latter watched for stragglers and helped them to join the main party.

The leader selected the camping place which had been agreed upon in advance, and the Black Mouths enforced the regulations that the lodges be arranged in a circle at a certain distance from each other and compelled those whose lodges were out of place to take them down and set them up in such a way that the circle was complete except for a larger entrance at the side of the leader's lodge where the horses could be brought through to be corraled within the open circle. The leader's household was at the front of the line when traveling and was the first to set up a tepee; the back end of the line which was assembled by household groups swung around in a wide circle so that the last in the line set up their tepee at the side of the leader's tepee, thus completing the circle. Ropes were tied between the tepees forming a corral into which the horses were driven for the night.

The leader's tepee was used as a meeting place for the people assisting him in planning the hunt. They selected the scouts each day and relieved others who had ridden far; when the party had reached its destination, they also selected the leader of the hunters who was changed from day to day if the work of killing animals was tedious as was often the case when the buffaloes were in small bands. The leader was responsible for the success of the entire party and was expected to call in the hunters if scouts reported an enemy encampment until it was decided whether to move to another place or make provisions for the defense of the party. The Black Mouths drove all the women and children into the camp and enforced rigid rules against leaving.

The men butchered the animals and brought the meat to the camp, while the women cut it into strips and dried it on scaffolds. All were expected to get equal amounts, and a woman

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17



could go to the pile brought in by anyone if her husband was slow in returning with his meat. There was no moiety division of the animals as was employed with the corral. Everyone was expected to work curing the meat, men and women alike. Older men would haul poles for scaffolds and set them up. Some husbands would be out as scouts and could not butcher. Crows Heart had been on a number of summer hunts and said that he never made a special effort to help his lodge group. As soon as he unloaded his meat, it was taken by anyone who was ready to cure it. Scattercorn said that one did not ask permission to take a hunter's meat and that one was more likely to be criticized for not working hard enough than for appearing selfish. All my informants were in agreement that quarrels over division of the meat and hides were unknown.

The leader and the leader of the hunters were entitled to the tongues, but these were shared with others having the buffalo as a god, while some tongues were given to old people. The evenings were spent in dancing and singing.

There was a marked increase of fasting during the summer hunts. Many thought that they secured better visions when fasting away from the village. Others thought that it would be highly desirable to fast far from the village to get visions from supernatural beings that might not come to the villages to "adopt a son." The older men taught that the young buffaloes lived in certain buttes and that fasting while out on the summer buffalo range would increase the next year's calf crop. To perpetuate the buffalo supply, they made offerings of speckled eagle feathers and calicoes to these buttes and encouraged the young men to fast near them. The leader would receive many valuable presents from young men seeking visions at that time while praying for their success when the thongs were being inserted through the skin. Dragging heads of recently killed buffaloes through the camp was a customary practice. Crows Heart thought that most young men who had recently fasted in the Okipa ceremony and had not received visions would repeat their vision quest at that time. The hunt would be terminated in time to reach the village before the corn was in the milk stage. Usually a second performance of the Okipa was held a short time after returning.

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17



## BEARS ARM'S NARRATIVE OF EAGLE-TRAPPING. II

223 Early in fall the leader, Wolfs Eyes, said, "I am going out eagle-trapping." There are two ways of getting up a group; some leaders accept volunteers, or the leader may select his men. We went to him and said. "We wish to go with you," and he said that it would be all right. He told us to take certain products from the garden such as roast corn, dried yellow corn, white flour corn, and dried squash. Some prepared their own baits at home. Most of the baits were stuffed jackrabbit skins. Those who did not have any baits made them after we were located at the eagle-trapping lodge and the tepees had been put up. Some would use a piece of deer hide cut up with ears on and two legs on the side.

In the party were the leader, Wolfs Eyes; Big Walk; Little Crow; Lance Owner; Little Bull; Holding Eagle; Black Bear; SittingWoman; White Body; Bears Arm; Louie Wolf or Red Horse; Many Birds; a boy, Spotted Weasel; Little Crow's wife, Otter Woman, and their daughter, Comes Out; Big Walk's wife, Plain Blossom, and their grandson, Jim Foot or Foot Prints; Plain Blossom's daughter, Too Costly; Woman in Water, wife of Charging Eagle, and her son, Richard Burr; Lance Owner's wife, Yellow Stalk; Holding Eagle's wife, Bobcat Woman. Charging Eagle being a policeman, he could not get away, but his wife, being Bears Arm's mother's sister, went along to help with the work in the camp. Also my mother's mother and Woman in Water were sisters. There were several women along because there was much to do, since in bad weather we would go out and kill mountain sheep, elk, and deer, so the women came along to care for the meet and hides.

[462]

484 492 When everything was ready, the young women took their bullboats to the river and crossed our stuff consisting of tepees, poles, provisions, bedding, and cooking utensils. It took nearly all day to cross the stuff. The first camp was at Beaver Creek. We used tepee poles tied together as travois. The horses pulled poles with the tepees and bedding, while several additional pack horses were loaded down with bedding. We were all on horseback and traveled very slowly. When traveling, the leader was at the head of the party, while the hunters were to the side or in advance of the others.

487 The second day we traveled to End of World Buttes and stopped northeast of Killdeer the third night. After camping on the east side of Killdeer, we went around the north side of the Killdeer Mountains and camped on the north side. From there we went north because that was the best route to cross the Little Missouri River. After we left the Little Missouri, we went to the place called Wolf Pit. When we reached our destination, we commenced to put up our lodge, for there was no lodge there before.

223 The place was selected by the leader because of the presence of a prairie-dog town there in a valley extending from the Yellowstone River eastward to the Little Missouri. All along that valley there were prairie dogs, and the eagles traveled along this valley in order to catch these animals. Then the Indians would come to this site, and our leader thought that it would be a good place to catch the birds.

346 784 223 As soon as the camp was selected, all set to work erecting the lodge, even the women helped by cutting the grass to pack between the poles and digging dirt to put over the lodge. There was an opening at the top for the sparks and smoke. There were four posts and railing on top, while the rest of the poles

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17



223 796 of you; it is an A-ci-ra'-wi'-a," meaning really a bear woman, for the origin was from the bears.

224 462 In early days when young men went out this way, the single girls would marry some of them before they left and then go out there. The women would prepare the meat from the mountain sheep and work on the hides while the men trapped. To secure these fine hides, women would marry a single man in order to get a chance to go out there.

223 796 The pits being dug, early the next morning we got up without having any breakfast and went to our pits. Some of the pits were old ones, but several new ones were made. Sometimes there would be two pits together, and then they would fix the last pit up and go into it. For their baits some had blood stored away while others had jackrabbits. Others had a hide fixed up so that it looked like some animal. Water was mixed with the dry blood and put on the bait. In the evening each man came out, and those who did not catch anything came home quietly, while those who had caught eagles would come in crying. When they heard someone come crying, the waiter would burn incense as the man with the eagle came into camp.

Eagle-trapping is called "Tied," when persons catching eagles are to kill them in the pit before bringing them to the lodge. The first man who came in that day was Little Bull. He had two birds with black tips. White Body was burning the incense. In case both the waiters were away, the leader would burn the incense himself. The next man who came in was Holding Eagle, and he had two birds with black tips. Black Bear caught two also. The saying is that, where you catch two eagles, they are a brother and a sister, for they travel together. These birds were all killed in the pit. The birds were brought in and placed at the head of the lodge in a row. The tails were brought in and placed on the buffalo head, each man keeping track of his own feathers.

223 777 The next day my brother, Little Bull, took me along, and we went into his pit. He caught four that day, and, when the fifth had landed on the bait, he told me to catch it by the feet, which I did. He helped me pull the bird down into the pit. He took me along to show me how to catch the birds. The next time he went out he caught three more, which made ten in all that he had caught. Three warbonnets could be made of them, and he had one tail extra. The leader said to him, "That is enough; you must not go out any more, or you will have bad luck." After that Little Bull did not go out any more.

223 The second time Holding Eagle went out he caught three, and the third time he caught two, so that he had seven. Black Bear caught two the first time, three the second time, and two the third time, making seven for him. Lance Owner did not have any luck in his pit, so he was advised to go into Little Bull's pit, where he caught two. Little Crow did not catch anything in his pit, so he was also told to go into Little Bull's pit, and he caught two there. Sitting Woman caught three; White Body did not catch any. Wolfs Eyes and his helper did not trap.

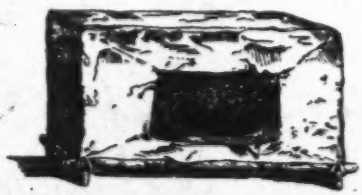
223 796 All these birds were killed in the pit, each trapper having a Baby Stone in his hole. While facing east, they broke the birds' necks, and in that way the spirits of the birds would return to their spirit home down the river.

There are two ways of trapping eagles. This time we followed the ceremony called "Tied" which originated with the black bear. The other way was the real eagle-trapping and in that ceremony they had ways that were different from the ceremony Wolfs Eyes used. In the other ceremony if a trapper fell down and tells the leader about it, his named is changed. This time we did

6: Wied-Neuwied T-5 (1832-1834) 1843 NQ17 Mandan NQ17



height, are long rafters, inclining to the centre; they are placed near each other, and bear the roof. On the outside the huts are covered with a kind of mat, made of osiers, joined together with bark, and now the skeleton of the hut is finished. Over this hay is spread, and the outer covering is of earth. The men and women work together in erecting these huts, and the relations, neighbours, and friends, assist them in the work. The building of the huts, manufacturing of their arms, hunting, and wars, and part of the labours of the harvest, are the occupations of the men; every other kind of work is left to the women, who, though in general well treated, are obliged to perform all the really laborious work. The women fetch fuel, in heavy loads, frequently from great distances, carry water, and, in winter, blocks of ice into the huts, cook, tan the skins, make all the clothing, lay out the plantations, perform field labour, &c. &c. In the centre of the hut a circular place is dug for the fire, over which the kettle is suspended. This fire-place, or hearth, is often enclosed with a ledge of stones. The fuel is laid, in moderately thick pieces, on the external edge of the hearth, crossing each other in the middle, when it is kindled, and the pieces gradually pushed in as they burn away. The Indians are not fond of large fires. The inmates sit round it, on low seats, made of peeled osiers, covered with buffalo or bear skin. Round the inner circumference of the hut lie or hang the baggage, the furniture, and other property, in leather bags, the painted parchment travelling bags, and the harness of the horses; and on separate stages there are arms, sledges, and snow-shoes, while meat and maize, piled up, complete the motley assemblage. (See Mr. Bodmer's drawing of the interior of the hut of Dipauch, Plate XIX.) The beds stand against the wall of the hut; they consist of a large square case, made of parchment or skins, with a square entrance, and are large enough to hold several persons, who lie very conveniently and warm on skins and blankets. (See the woodcut.)



In the winter huts they place, at the inside of the door, a high screen of willow boughs, covered with hides, which keeps off the draught of air from without, and especially protects the fire.

The summer huts are very cool, and, generally speaking, have no unpleasant smell. Mr. Say gives a very good description, and a tolerably accurate print, of a Konza lodge, or hut, and, with

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17



## LETTER—No. 17.

### MANDAN VILLAGE, *UPPER MISSOURI.*

595 171 I MENTIONED in the foregoing epistle, that the chiefs of the Mandans frequently have a plurality of wives. Such is the custom amongst all of these North Western tribes, and a few general remarks on this subject will apply to them all, and save the trouble of repeating them.

Polygamy is countenanced amongst all of the North American Indians, so far as I have visited them; and it is no uncommon thing to find a chief with six, eight, or ten, and some with twelve or fourteen wives in his lodge. Such is an ancient custom, and in their estimation is right as well as necessary. 562 595 Women in a savage state, I believe, are always held in a rank inferior to that of the men, in relation to whom in many respects they stand rather in the light of menials and slaves than otherwise; and as they are the "hewers of wood and drawers of water," it becomes a matter of necessity for a chief (who must be liberal, keep open doors, and entertain, for the support of his popularity) to have in his wigwam a sufficient number of such handmaids or menials to perform the numerous duties and drudgeries of so large and expensive an establishment.

595 556 462 There are two other reasons for this custom which operate with equal, if not with greater force than the one above assigned. In the first place, these people, though far behind the civilized world in acquisitiveness, have still more or less passion for the accumulation of wealth, or, in other words, for the luxuries of life; and a chief, excited by a desire of this kind, together with a wish to be able to furnish his lodge with something more than ordinary for the entertainment of his own people, as well as strangers who fall upon his hospitality, sees fit to marry a number of wives, who are kept at hard labour during most of the year; and the avails of that labour enable him to procure those luxuries, and give to his lodge the appearance of respectability which is not ordinarily seen. Amongst those tribes who trade with the Fur Companies, this system is carried out to a great extent, and the women are kept for the greater part of the year, dressing buffalo robes and other skins for the market; and the brave or chief, who has the greatest number of wives, is considered the most affluent and envied man in the tribe; for his table is most bountifully supplied, and his lodge the most abundantly furnished with the luxuries

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17



of civilized manufacture, who has at the year's end the greatest number of robes to vend to the Fur Company. 595

The manual labour amongst savages is all done by the women; and as there are no daily labourers or persons who will "*hire out*" to labour for another, it becomes necessary for him who requires more than the labour or services of one, to add to the number by legalizing and compromising by the ceremony of marriage, his stock of labourers; who can thus, and thus alone, be easily enslaved, and the results of their labour turned to good account. 556 462

There is yet the other inducement, which probably is more effective than either; the natural inclination which belongs to man, who stands high in the estimation of his people and wields the sceptre of power—surrounded by temptations which he considers it would be unnatural to resist, where no law or regulation of society stands in the way of his enjoyment. Such a custom amongst savage nations can easily be excused too, and we are bound to excuse it, when we behold man in a state of nature, as he was made, following a natural inclination, which is sanctioned by ancient custom and by their religion, without a law or regulation of their society to discountenance it; and when, at the same time, such an accumulation of a man's household, instead of quadrupling his expenses (as would be the case in the civilized world), actually becomes his wealth, as the results of their labour abundantly secure to him all the necessaries and luxuries of life. 595

There are other and very rational grounds on which the propriety of such a custom may be urged, one of which is as follows:—as all nations of Indians in their natural condition are unceasingly at war with the tribes that are about them, for the adjustment of ancient and never-ending feuds, as well as from a love of glory, to which in Indian life the battle-field is almost the only road, their warriors are killed off to that extent, that in many instances two and sometimes three women to a man are found in a tribe. In such instances I have found that the custom of polygamy has kindly helped the community to an evident relief from a cruel and prodigious calamity.

The instances of which I have above spoken, are generally confined to the chiefs and medicine-men; though there is no regulation prohibiting a poor or obscure individual from marrying several wives, other than the personal difficulties which lie between him and the hand which he wishes in vain to get, for want of sufficient celebrity in society, or from a still more frequent objection, that of his inability (from want of worldly goods) to deal in the customary way with the fathers of the girls whom he would appropriate to his own household.

There are very few instances indeed, to be seen in these regions, where a poor or ordinary citizen has more than one wife; but amongst chiefs and braves of great reputation, and doctors, it is common to see some six or

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17



From the enslaved and degraded condition in which the women are held in the Indian country, the world would naturally think that theirs must be a community formed of incongruous and unharmonizing materials; and consequently destitute of the fine, reciprocal feelings and attachments which flow from the domestic relations in the civilized world; yet it would be untrue, and doing injustice to the Indians, to say that they were in the least behind us in conjugal, in filial, and in paternal affection. There is no trait in the human character which is more universal than the attachments which flow from these relations, and there is no part of the human species who have a stronger affection and a higher regard for them than the North American Indians. 593

There is no subject in the Indian character of more importance to be rightly understood than this, and none either that has furnished me more numerous instances and more striking proofs, of which I shall make use on a future occasion, when I shall say a vast deal more of marriage—of divorce—of polygamy—and of Indian domestic relations. For the present I am scribbling about the looks and usages of the Indians who are about me and under my eye; and I must not digress too much into general remarks, lest I lose sight of those who are near me, and the first to be heralded. 000

Such, then, are the Mandans—their women are beautiful and modest,—and amongst the respectable families, virtue is as highly cherished and as inapproachable, as in any society whatever; yet at the same time a chief may marry a dozen wives if he pleases, and so may a white man; and if either wishes to marry the most beautiful and modest girl in the tribe, she is valued only equal, perhaps, to two horses, a gun with powder and ball for a year, five or six pounds of beads, a couple of gallons of whiskey, and a handful of awls. 583

The girls of this tribe, like those of most of these north-western tribes, marry at the age of twelve or fourteen, and some at the age of eleven years; and their beauty, from this fact, as well as from the slavish life they lead, soon after marriage vanishes. Their occupations are almost continual, and they seem to go industriously at them, as if from choice or inclination, without a murmur. 582

The principal occupations of the women in this village, consist in procuring wood and water, in cooking, dressing robes and other skins, in drying meat and wild fruit, and raising corn (maize). The Mandans are somewhat of agriculturists, as they raise a great deal of corn and some pumpkins and squashes. This is all done by the women, who make their hoes of the shoulder-blade of the buffalo or the elk, and dig the ground over instead of ploughing it, which is consequently done with a vast deal of labour. They raise a very small sort of corn, the ears of which are not longer than a man's thumb. This variety is well adapted to their climate, as it ripens sooner than other varieties, which would not mature in so cold a latitude. The green corn season is one of great festivity with them, and one of much importance. The greater part of their crop is eaten during these festivals, 462 241 251

437 willing and ready to serve you as long as you have any property.
177 But when all is expended you may shift for yourself, as they will pretend they do not understand you any longer. Besides paying our host [343] beforehand, I promised him a tobacco-pipe on my departure, if I were then pleased with his conduct during our stay. His pay consisted of the following articles: 60 balls and powder, 4 large knives, 2 small knives, 1 fathom tobacco, 1 dozen rings, 1 dozen hawk-bills, 6 flints, 3 worms, 3 awls, and 1/4 pound blue beads.

164 [343] The natives at present are mostly affected with a bad cough, which daily takes some of them off. Aged and infirm persons, and young children, are the common victims to this disease. It is a kind of whooping-cough, which has appeared all along the Red and Assiniboine rivers, on the Saskatchewan even to Fort des Prairies, and in several other parts of the North West, carrying off many people

241 July 21st. I set off early on horseback with part of my people
●[462 for the upper villages. We passed extensive fields of corn, beans,
561] squashes, and sunflowers. Many women and children were already
412 employed in clearing and hoeing their plantations. Their hoes are the shoulderblade of a buffalo, to which is fastened a crooked stick for a handle; the soil not being stony, this slight implement answers every purpose. The road first led over two hills, after which we came to a smooth and pleasant plain for about two miles to the Saulteur (Soulier) [Amahami—Analyst] village, of about 40 huts.

361 [362]..These villages are surrounded by a kind of stockade, princi-
417 pally made of driftwood, which has a miserable appearance and is daily falling to pieces; but I am told that upon any emergency it can be put into a tolerably good state of defense at very short notice, as every man, woman, and child lends a hand.

526 We witnessed a diversion which takes place almost every day
481 between the Mandanes and Saulteurs (Souliers). It is the exercise
702 of running long foot races, in order to be prepared for the emergency of being dismounted and obliged to fly from their enemies at war. They assemble upon a beautiful green near the village, where, having remained some time, calling out to their comrades to come and run, they set off in a file on a slow trot, entirely naked, taking the road that leads up the hills to the S., about a mile from the village. Passing near those rising grounds, they disappear, and are not seen till they reappear from the S.E., down a steep hill and over a level plain, to the spot whence they started. Here they do not stop, but rush on to the Missourie, and plunge in headlong, all